

## 10.0 Fuels Reduction and Firebreaks

- **Fuels Reduction and Fuel breaks:** Fuel modifications in the Bear Lake – West assessment area can be accomplished in a number of ways. Because of limited experience and limited finances at the County level, fuel breaks would be most effective if actions are undertaken in cooperation with State and Federal agencies. In addition, as much of the proposed fuel break would be on State or Federal lands the respective agencies will likely determine the method used for fuels reduction. The fuel breaks proposed along County roads and roads within the subdivisions, created by mowing grass and rotator-beating the shrubs, can be accomplished by contractors or County personnel and equipment provided Federal funds are assigned to the County. Pruning of some trees and larger shrubs may also be needed. On private land, the simplest and least expensive method of controlling fuels would involve removal of some mountain shrubs and mowing the grass on each lot.
- **Type of Fuels Treatment:** Types of fuel treatment will vary with location and landownership. Prescribed fire could be used within the areas of fuel modification on State or Federal land, but residents have opposed use of this method in the mountain shrub stands in the past. In the conifer tree stands a combination of pruning and thinning will be required to create a shaded fuel break at least 100 feet wide on the east aspects. On the breaks above the canyons at least 200 feet will be required to slow wildfires.
- **Locations of Firebreaks and Fuel Treatments:** Nearly all of the subdivisions could benefit from firebreaks and fuel treatments. Furthermore, nearly all of the subdivisions could benefit from increased access. Access is especially poor for the subdivisions to the south around Fish Haven. There are many narrow, one-way roads in this area that would limit egress and emergency service access.
- **Treatment Timing:** The mowing of grasslands or road rights-of-ways should be done in the spring or early summer prior to the curing of the grass when it would be most flammable (i.e., prior to grasses producing seed heads).
- **Treatment Necessity:** Without some level of treatment fuels will continue to increase increasing the hazard and the risk of large fire if an ignition occurs during drought conditions. While the construction of fuel breaks or reduction of existing fuel loads will not prevent wild land fires these modifications should make the fires easier to control.

## 10.1 Water Facilities

- **Construction of Water Storage Facility and Dry Wells:** If Federal seed monies are allocated, Bear Lake County will oversee their location and construction.
- **Type of Water Storage Facility:** A concrete facility will hold at least 10,000 gallons and include a related water delivery system. This facility will be located in or near the Bear Lake Ranchettes north of Ovid and Liberty and another in Geneva. Development of a water source will be the determining factor. Construction must be accomplished during the relatively short spring and summer season because of the normal early arrival of frost.
- **Location of Dry Wells:** Additional water sources are needed in the southern portion of the assessment area in the subdivisions surrounding Bear Lake.
- **Treatment Necessity:** Water is a serious issue in the assessment area, especially to the south around Bear Lake. Idaho Water Resources will not permit wells to be drilled on public land where most of the water probably exists. There is little water on private land in the area (most wells do not have flows significant enough to aid fire fighting equipment) where wells may be drilled. Consequently, a permit has been applied for so that all the landowners in the southern portion of the assessment area can drill one community well which can be used for fire fighting purposes. Pacificorp contests any application to Idaho Dept. of Water Resources to drill wells larger than single domestic use. Wells drilled for fire protection purposes should be exempt from this demand. Idaho is permitted to store up to 125,000 acre feet of water flowing down the Bear River. A way to store that much water needs to be developed. Storage tanks and reservoirs could be filled in the spring so that water sources aren't tapped into during the summer when the water is needed for agriculture.

## 10.2 Community Education and Outreach

- The purpose of the community education program is to 1) educate the public of the dangers of wildfire in the area, 2) urge residents to take responsibility in reducing the risk of wildfire and create defensible space around their residence, and 3) increase awareness of the natural role of low-intensity fire in woodland or grassland ecosystems and the necessity of prescribed burns or occasionally allowing woodlands or grasslands to burn.
- This public education and outreach should be supported with Federal funds, but should be spearheaded by the local Fire Districts with help from the BLM and Forest Service. The program must start in the spring to remind people to prepare their properties for the upcoming fire season and continue until fall as residents will vary during the summer as various members of trusts arrive. This is likely going to be a problem as most of the homes are only occupied during the weekends or family vacation time. The risk of wildfire will increase almost daily as the grasslands begin to cure and overstory plants reduce growth. Without an outreach program in which the seasonal residents as well as yearlong residents are contacted, little will change within the subdivisions.

## 11.0 Wildfire Mitigation Strategy and Implementation

The wildfire mitigation action items provide direction on specific activities that organizations and residents in Bear Lake County can undertake to reduce risk and prevent loss from wildfire events. Each action item is followed by ideas for implementation which can be used by local entities to pursue strategies for implementation. For the following action items, the recommended lead organization(s) is in bold font. Each of these items will be subject to funding availability.

Ideas for implementation:

-Initiate a fuels reduction such as controlled burning in high risk regions at the interface of the Forest Service Boundary and the Bear Lake West subdivisions

Coordinating Organizations:	Bear Lake County Fire District Bureau of Land Management Forest Service
Timeline:	Immediately
Plan Goals Addressed:	Protect life and Property, partnerships and implementation
Cost Estimate:	500 acres treated @ \$600/acre=\$300,000